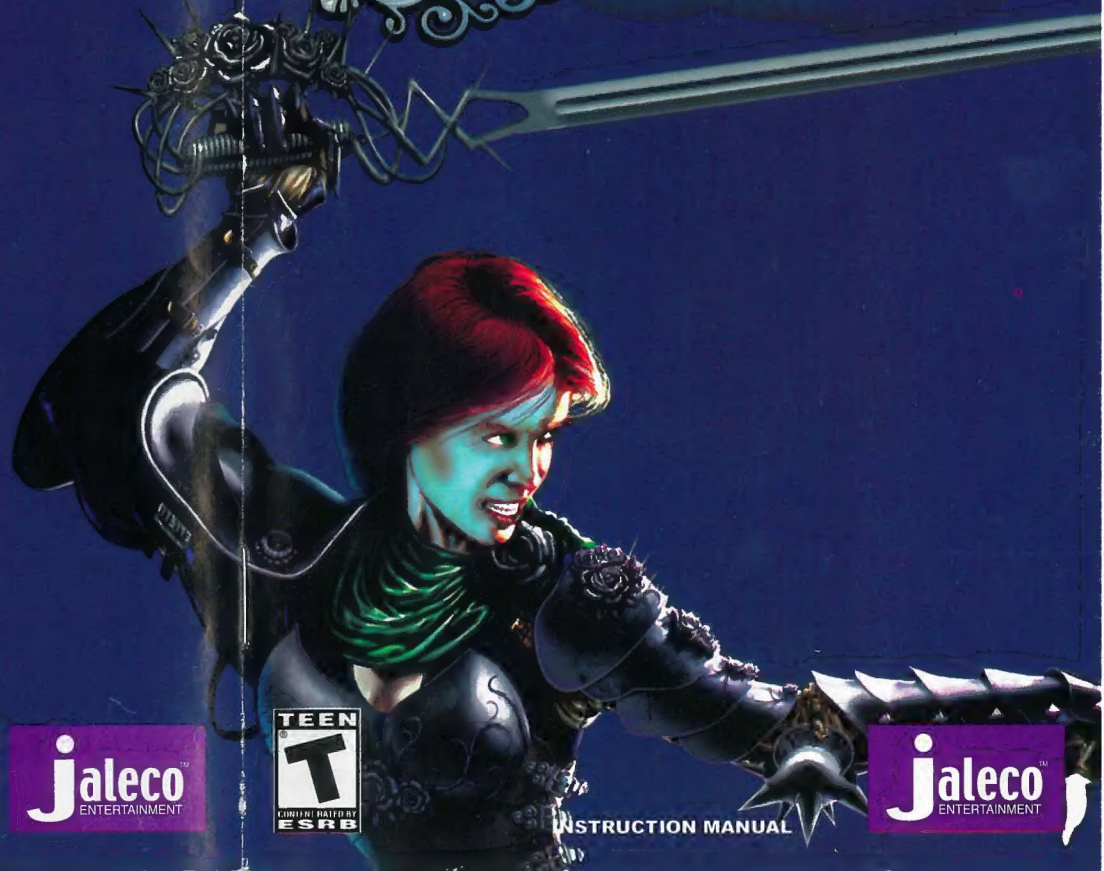




NIGHT CASTER II -EQUINOX-



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INSTRUCTION MANUAL



Safety Information

About Photosensitive Seizures

A very small percentage of people may experience a seizure when exposed to certain visual images, including flashing lights or patterns that may appear in video games. Even people who have no history of seizures or epilepsy may have an undiagnosed condition that can cause these "photosensitive epileptic seizures" while watching video games.

These seizures may have a variety of symptoms, including light-headedness, altered vision, eye or face twitching, jerking or shaking of arms and legs, disorientation, confusion or momentary loss of awareness. Seizures may also cause loss of consciousness or convulsions that can lead to injury from falling down or striking nearby objects. Immediately stop playing and consult a doctor if you experience any of these symptoms. Parents should watch for or ask their children about the above symptoms-children and teenagers are more likely than adults to experience these seizures.

The risk of photosensitive epileptic seizures may be reduced by sitting farther from the television screen, using a smaller television screen, playing in a well-lit room, and not playing when you are drowsy or fatigued.

If you or any of your relatives have a history of seizures or epilepsy, consult a doctor before playing.

Other Important Health and Safety Information

The Xbox Instruction Manual contains important health and safety information that you should read and understand before using this software.

Avoid Damage to Your Television

Do not use with certain televisions. Some televisions, especially front- or rear-projection types, can be damaged if any video games, including Xbox games, are played on them. Static images presented during the normal course of game play may "burn in" to the screen, causing a permanent shadow of the static image to appear at all times, even when video games are not being played. Similar damage may occur from static images created when placing a video game on hold or pause. Consult your television owner's manual to determine if video games can be played safely on your set. If you are unable to find this information in the owner's manual, contact your television dealer or the manufacturer to determine if video games can be played safely on your set.

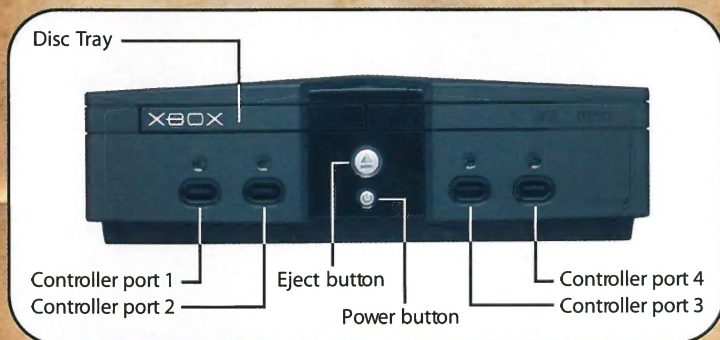
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USING THE XBOX VIDEO GAME SYSTEM

1. Set up your Xbox™ video game system by following the instructions in the Xbox Instruction Manual.
2. Press the power button and the status indicator light will light up.
3. Press the eject button and disc tray will open.
4. Place the *NightCaster II: Equinox* disc on the disc tray with the label facing up and close the disc tray.
5. Follow the on-screen instructions and refer to this manual for more information about playing *NightCaster II: Equinox*.



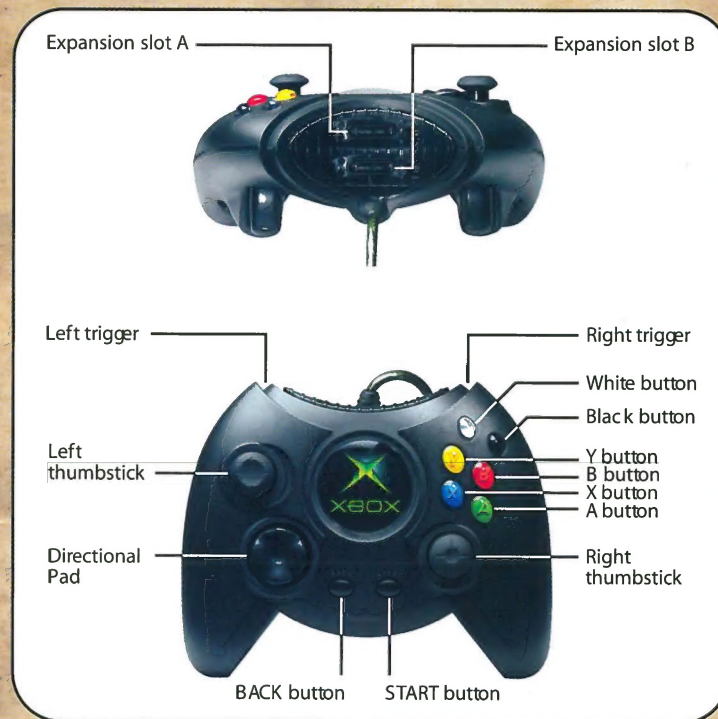
Avoiding Damage to Discs or the Disc Drive

To avoid damage to discs or the disc drive:

- Insert only Xbox-compatible discs into the disc drive.
- Never use oddly shaped discs, such as star-shaped or heart-shaped discs.
- Do not leave a disc in the Xbox console for extended periods when not in use.
- Do not move the Xbox console while the power is on and disc is inserted.
- Do not apply labels, stickers, or other foreign objects to discs.

USING THE XBOX CONTROLLER

1. Connect the Xbox Controller to any controller port on the front of the Xbox console. For multiple players, connect additional controllers to available controller ports.
2. Insert any expansion devices (for example, Xbox Memory Units) into controller expansion slots as appropriate.
3. Follow the on-screen instructions and refer to this manual for more information about using the Xbox Controller to play *NightCaster II: Equinox*.



THE WORLD OF NIGHTCASTER

The Dawn of Time From the Book of the Tree

1.1 In the beginning, there was naught but chaos. The essences of Fire, Water, Light and Dark boiled in an endless cauldron of nothingness. The Great Creator, seeing no worth in this, gathered up the essences in his benevolent hands, and made them one. From that joining, a great spark took form.

1.2 Opening his hand, the Creator blew upon the spark. Fire and Water fell away, and the earth was formed. Light and Darkness fell away, giving substance to the sky. The Creator smiled, and magical creatures took form, praising his name.

1.3 Lastly, the Creator gazed into his hand. A seed remained. Taking the seed, he sowed it in the newly formed soil. From this, the Great Yew Tree took root, and beneath her loving boughs, all life began in earnest.

1.4 But there cannot exist light without darkness. Another was formed, torn from the coldest shadow of the benevolent Yew Tree. Nameless and shapeless, it hungered for naught but the destruction of all that the Great Tree held dear.

1.5 The Creator spoke at last. "Thus shall this world stand in eternal opposition, a reflection of the hearts of my children, and thus shall it decline or prosper... until the end of days."

The Time of Shadows

Ages passed and the keeping of the world slipped through the fingers of countless hands, but always there was the Great Mother and her mighty Yew Tree... and always the shadow beneath her, plotting her destruction.

It was in the Time of Man when humans basked in the light of the Great Tree's favor, that the troubles truly began. Knowing that his sister was preoccupied with the fickle hearts of the unpredictable race that she now coveted, the Dark One knew that the opportunity was nigh for his eons of schemes to finally reach fruition.

Secreted beneath the tongue of a dark wolf thirsty for drink, the Dark One waited. As the creature bent its head before the Great Tree and begged for relief, the Dark One dripped his essence into the pristine pool that stood at her root. Her watershed tainted, the Great Yew slowly began to wither. In turn, all things that sprung from the soil followed.

Knowing that her earthly vessel was dying, the Great Mother called upon her guardian, the green dragon, Thorn. Having transferred her spirit to an unassuming glass orb, she fled, taking with her the last uncorrupted branch from the dying Yew. Secreted away to a lonely cave beneath the vast Tribunal Mountains, she waited for the one that would return the world to the light.

The Layman's Curse

And so it was that a darkness formed across the brow of the northern lands, a growing shadow that withered every plant; blackened every tree; slowly but surely depriving the creatures of the breathe that is life. Those who worked the soil labeled it 'The Layman's Curse', and called to the Great Tree for relief. Little did they know, there was none to give.

Outraged by the fact that victory had somehow slipped through his fingers, the Dark One drew to him any creature that walked in shadow. With oaths of future glories and a forked tongue he gathered a terrible army, promising to exalt them above all others; to burn down all that the human's had built, and erect a great kingdom upon the ashes. The throne to that kingdom, he promised, would be held for the one who brought before him the Orb that speaks but has no name and the one that was destined to bear it. At his feet, the under-races of the world pledged with blood. In the darkness they exalted him: Grazish-Kardor: the Nightcaster.

Thus, the hordes descended upon the unsuspecting humans with blade and spear, searching the land for what they saw as the key to the Dark One's kingdom: the Orb and its bearer, the one who would be known as the bringer of Light.



The Lightbringer

Far to the south, outside the little hamlet known as Perth, three ten-year old children played hide-and-seek near the foot of the Tribunal Mountains; three extraordinary children unhindered by the sorrows of a world that was descending into chaos. The first was a fire-haired boy known as Lochran, the only child of the village blacksmith. He was young, heartfelt and strong yet quiet in his ways of loyalty and honor. The second was Madelyn, daughter to the Lord Provost of Perth. She was a dark girl, as dark as her raven's hair; troubled by dreams of a formless entity that whispered to her from the shadows. The last was Arran, a quick-witted boy that was as adventurous as he was kind. The three loved each other beyond reason, and there was nothing that the boys would not do to win the favor of their maiden fair.

Looking for a hiding place in the wood above Perth, Arran came across a cave that he had never seen before. When his tiny voice broke the silence, the Great Mother, in the guise of the Orb, blazed to life. In the twilight of the cave, she told the boy of the horror that was to come. She told him that he could restore light to the world... but there was a price. To save the lives of those he loved, Arran would have to give up portions of his own; walking the world as a ghost; skimming through time; turning his back on his family and friends in pursuit of the four Essences of Magic. Only with their power could he recreate creation; only then could he undo the evil that had been done.

Arran paused for only a moment. Slowly, with the last branch of the Great Yew in hand, he reached for the Orb... and in a flash, disappeared without a trace.

The Black Rose

The years passed slowly as the darkness raged across the land. Believing Arran killed in a rockslide, Madelyn and Lochran were left to survive as best they could. It was not long before the hordes descended upon Perth, destroying all that stood in their path. But the people of Perth would not go quietly. With her father killed in battle, it was none other than Madelyn, with Lochran at her side, who took up her father's sword, turning the tide of battle. From that day forward, she would come to be known as 'The Black Rose', and her banner would stand for hope and prosperity for all humankind.

But the banner weighed heavy in her grip. Still troubled by the darkness within her, Madelyn struggled with herself: caught between her duties as the 'Black Rose' and the shadow that played across her soul.

The Shadows Grow Deeper

It was in the town of Stonehaven years later that the forces of darkness rose to strike the seeming deathblow. Under siege by the terrible dragon Storm, Madelyn and Lochran rose to protect the town. Seeing Madelyn alone and unprotected, Lochran raced to her side. In the twilight, he was struck down. Heartbroken and helpless, Madelyn succumbed to despair. Wheeling on her, Storm took her up in his great claws and made his way towards the Isle of Yew, and his dark master.

Having returned from procuring the Essence of Dark, Arran was forced to watch helplessly as the horrors unfolded. Too late to save Madelyn, he raced to Lochran's side. There, in his arms, Lochran died, leaving the Essence of Fire in his place: a birth right of his family and the fiery heart that beat in his massive chest.

With one friend dead and the other in the hands of the evil Nightcaster, Arran had no choice but to carry on with his quest. He would procure all four Essences of Magic, he promised himself, and with them he would have his revenge.

The Final Confrontation

Thus, Arran and the Orb climbed the Isle of Yew to face the Nightcaster. There, at the sign of the greatest betrayal, they were determined to use the Essences of Magic to set things right. But, the greatest test was yet to come.

As Arran stood as the vessel of light, so would another stand as the vessel of darkness. Madelyn, consumed by the shadows, was put forth by the Nightcaster in a last ditch effort to stay Arran's hand. To defeat him, Arran would have no choice but to destroy her.

In the darkness at the top of the Isle of Yew, Arran struck down Madelyn, and through her, the Nightcaster's power was broken. Using the power of the Essences of Magic, the Great Mother banished the Dark One to the shadows.

Heartbroken, Arran was consumed by his agony. Planting the staff in the fertile soil, he turned his back on the Orb and the world. Kneeling at Madelyn's side, he succumbed to a lifetime of grief. Unbeknownst to him, the staff behind him magically took root. Her vessel restored, the Great Mother took her rightful place within the Great Tree.

A New Beginning

Knowing the struggles that had plagued their souls, the Great Mother took pity on Arran and Madelyn. In her benevolent radiance, she breathed life into Madelyn, returning them both to wide-eyed children, granting back to them all that they had sacrificed for their kind.

Years had passed in quiet solitude. Arran and Madelyn, now husband and wife, lived a life of peace and prosperity. But, as with all things, nothing can last forever...

THE HEROES OF THE LAND

Arran - The Lightbringer

The Lightbringer and champion of the human race, Arran is still as kind and heartfelt as ever. Spending much of his time telling stories to the children of the nearby village, Arran was resigned to a quiet life on the farm before trouble began anew.

Strengths

An adept spellcaster, Arran is a master of the elements of magic. With focus and concentration unrivaled by any that remain true to the art, Arran is perhaps the greatest spellcaster of his age.

Weaknesses

Arran has turned in his regular wooden staff for a bladed halberd, but is not very keen on using it. Much more comfortable weaving the elements than engaging in melee combat, Arran uses his halberd only as a last resort.



Madelyn - The Black Rose

The Black Rose and leader of the human armies against the Nightcaster, Madelyn, or Madi as she is referred to by her dearest friends, had finally found peace. Still as strong-willed and courageous as ever, Madi spent much of her time wrestling with the unruly rose bushes that blanketed her garden before she was once again required to pick up her sword.



Strengths

Madelyn is a weapons master. Trained by Lochran in the art of war, her mind for tactics and skill at swordplay remain second to none.

Weaknesses

Though quick-witted and capable, Madelyn has not the patience required to truly develop her innate abilities as a spellcaster. She is much more comfortable wading in with her sword 'Thorn' than she is channeling the elements to do her bidding.

The Orb - The Great Mother

The magical Orb holds part of the essence of the Great Tree of Life, the Great Mother herself, allowing her to communicate with Madelyn and Arran. Through her radiant spirit, their magic is channeled, granting them the power they need to complete their quest.

PLAYING THE GAME

Nightcaster II: Equinox is a game of spellcasting adventure and melee combat. Subsequently, there are a few overriding philosophies that must be assimilated to maximize your effectiveness while playing the game.

The Basic Theory of Elemental Magic

In the world of Nightcaster II: Equinox, all magic is derived from the four Essences of Magic, the very elements upon which the world has been created. Therefore, the art of spellcasting is one that has been divided into four separate schools, one for each element: Fire, Water, Light and Dark.

Subsequently, since life itself was created from the joining of these Essences, all things that exist in this world are elemental at their base, thus succumbing to the nature of the Essences themselves.

As is the nature of the Essences of Magic, Fire stands in opposition of Water, and Dark in the opposition of Light. Subsequently, many creatures throughout the world hold to the same guidelines. For example; a water creature is more susceptible to magic that is based in the element of fire, partially susceptible to magic that is based in the elements of light and dark, and least susceptible to magic that is based in the element of water; the element that is their own.

Keep in mind that this is a standard law that governs the world as a whole. This basic philosophy can be employed against any creature that you might face, maximizing the effectiveness of the spells that are chosen to dispatch them.

The Basic Theory of Melee Fighting

If there ever comes a point that your spells fail you, you will be forced to rely on your melee weapon. Melee combat in the world of Nightcaster II: Equinox involves both light and heavy attacks that can be strung together, using the **X** (light attack) and **A** (heavy attack) buttons to create more interesting and powerful attacks.

Most creatures that you will encounter on your quest possess a weapon themselves and are not shy about using them. You can use your weapon to Block their attacks, thus avoiding the damage that would normally have been dealt. Blocking is a very important tactic, and has been known to save many a would-be hero from certain death.

Style Rewards

There are many bonuses that can be unlocked by combining your spell and melee skills to defeat your enemies. These are considered Style Rewards and dispense a timed bonus when you have dispatched your enemies in interesting and creative ways. The table to the right lists the names of all Style Rewards, their Criteria and the Bonus that it entails.



| Name | Criteria | Bonus |
|--------------|--|--|
| 3+ kill | 3 or more creatures killed by a spell or melee attack, each no more then 0.5 seconds after the last. | +10 exp per kill in the combo |
| Adept | 3 or more colors killed in a combo | +5 damage to all attacks for 20 seconds |
| Mage Slayer | 3 or more different colors used in a 3+ kill combo | +10 damage to all attacks for 20 seconds |
| Archmage | 10 spell kills in one 3+ kill combo | Orb range + 1 unit for 20 seconds |
| Blade Master | 10 blade kills in one 3+ kill combo | +10 Melee damage to all melee attacks for 20 seconds |
| Blaze Slayer | All Fire creatures killed in a 3+ kill melee-only combo | +5 Melee damage against Fire creatures for 5 seconds |
| Cold Bane | All Water creatures killed in a 3+ kill melee-only combo | +5 Melee damage against Water creatures for 20 seconds |

| Name | Criteria | Bonus |
|---------------|--|--|
| Nightcaster | All Light creatures killed in a 3+ kill melee-only combo | +5 Melee damage against Light creatures for 20 seconds |
| Light Bringer | All Dark creatures killed in a 3+ kill melee-only combo | +5 Melee damage against Dark creatures for 20 seconds |
| Fire Mage | All water creatures killed in a 3+ kill spell-only combo | +5 Fire damage for 20 seconds to all fire spells |
| Water Mage | All fire creatures killed in a 3+ kill spell-only combo | +5 Water damage for 20 seconds to all water spells |
| Light Mage | All dark creatures killed in a 3+ kill spell-only combo | +5 Light damage for 20 seconds to all light spells |
| Dark Mage | All light creatures killed in a 3+ kill spell-only combo | +5 Dark damage for 20 seconds to all dark spells |
| Dual Class | 3+ kill combo where both spells and sword were used | +14 exp per kill for 20 seconds |

THE MAIN MENU

After pressing the **Start** button from the title screen, you will find yourself at the Main Menu of Nightcaster II: Equinox. Here, you can start either a Single Player or Multi Player game, Load a saved game, adjust the game Options or view the Credits.

New Single Player

Selecting a Single Player game allows you to choose to play either Madelyn or Arran as you embark on your quest. To start a New Single Player game, simply position the cursor next to it on the Main Menu using either the **left thumbstick** or the **directional pad**, and press the **A** button.

New Multi Player

Selecting a Multi Player game allows you and a friend to play a cooperative game using both Madelyn and Arran. To start a New Multi Player game, simply position the cursor next to it on the Main Menu using either the **left thumbstick** or the **directional pad**, and press the **A** button.

Choosing A Character

After selecting whether you would like to start a New Single Player or a New Multi Player game, you will be prompted to choose your characters.

When playing a Single Player game, you will have the option to choose either Madelyn or Arran as the character for the game. To do so, simply position the cursor next to the name of the character you would like to play using either the **left thumbstick** or the **directional pad**, and press the **A** button. To return to the Main Menu, press the **B** button.

When playing a Multi Player game, you will be able to choose which controller will be used to control both Madelyn and Arran. To do so, move your controller icon to the desired character using either the **left thumbstick** or the **directional pad**, and press the **A** button on either controller to confirm the selections. To return to the Main Menu, press the **B** button.

Difficulty Levels

After choosing the type of game you would like to play, the character(s) that you wish to use and the controllers associated with each, you will be given the option to select the Difficulty Level for the game. The settings available are:

Easy

For those unskilled in the ways of magic

Normal

For those who hold some knowledge of that which is arcane

Difficult

For those who are exceedingly confident in their spellcasting abilities

To choose the Difficulty Level in either a Single Player or Multi Player game, simply position the cursor next to the setting you would like to choose for the game using either the **left thumbstick** or the **directional pad**, and press the **A** button to confirm your selection. To return to the previous screen, simply press the **B** button.



LOAD GAME

To Load a saved game from the Main Menu, position the cursor next to it using the **left thumbstick** or the **directional pad** and press the **A** button. This will bring you to the hardware selection page where you can choose to load a saved game from the Xbox Hard Disk or any one of the Memory Units that are currently plugged into one of the controllers.

The Source Screen

To distinguish where you would like to load the game from, simply use either the **left thumbstick** or the **directional pad** to choose the source that you wish to load the game from. When satisfied with your selection, press the **A** button. To return to the Main Menu, press the **B** button.

The Load Game Screen

The Load Game Screen displays the space information about the source hardware that you have chosen as your load destination as well as the names of all of the saved games that are currently stored within. To choose a game that you wish to load, simply highlight the game you wish to load by pressing **up** or **down** on either the **left thumbstick** or the **directional pad**. Once the appropriate saved game tag is highlighted, simply press the **A** button to load it. To return to the previous screen without loading a game, simply press the **B** button.

Options

Choosing Options from the Main Menu will allow you to view the Controller Layout as well as adjust the settings for both the Audio Options and Game Options that are associated with Nightcaster II: Equinox. To access the Options menu, simply move the cursor to it using either the **left thumbstick** or the **directional pad**, and press the **A** button. To return to the Main Menu, simply press the **B** button.

Controller Layout

Using either the **left thumbstick** or the **directional pad** to position the cursor next to Controller Layout on the Options menu will display all of the control settings that are associated with the game.

Audio Options

To adjust the Audio Options from the Options menu, simply move the cursor next to it using either the **left thumbstick** or the **directional pad** and press the **A** button. This will grant you access to the various settings that are located to the right of the screen.

To adjust any of these settings, simply press **up** or **down** on either the **left thumbstick** or the **directional pad** to position the cursor next to the heading of the effects that you would like to change. When highlighted, press **left** or **right** on either the **left thumbstick** or the **directional pad** to adjust the various settings. When satisfied, simply press the **A** button to confirm your selections.

ADJUSTABLE AUDIO OPTIONS

Spell Sound Effects

With this slider, you can adjust the volume of the sound effects that are associated with the various spells in the game.

Other Sound Effects

Using this slider, you can adjust the volume of the other various sound effects that are associated with the game. These sound effects include any and all creature and/or ambient environmental sound effects that you might encounter.

Music

With this slider, you will be able to adjust the volume of the output of the level music that is associated with the game.

Using Headphones

This setting toggles between Yes or No to distinguish whether or not you are using headphones to play the game.

GAME OPTIONS

To adjust the Game Options from the Options menu, simply move the cursor next to the heading using either the **left thumbstick** or the **directional pad** and press the **A** button. This will gain you access to the various settings that are located to the right of the screen.

To adjust any of these settings, simply press **up** or **down** on either the **left thumbstick** or the **directional pad** to position the cursor next to the heading of the effect that you would like to change. When highlighted, press **left** or **right** on either the **left thumbstick** or the **directional pad** to adjust. When satisfied with your selections, simply press the **A** button to confirm.

Tutorial Text

This option toggles between Yes or No to distinguish whether or not you would like the tutorial text to appear in the game.

Thumbstick Buttons

This option toggles between Yes or No to distinguish whether or not you would like to activate the buttons located underneath the thumbsticks. Keep in mind that by default, the **left thumbstick** button is used to rectify the camera and the **right thumbstick** button is used to return the Orb to the player.

Controller Vibration

This option toggles between Yes or No to distinguish whether or not you would like to activate the controller vibration feedback that is used throughout the game.

CREDITS

To view the Credits for Nightcaster II: Equinox, position the cursor next to the heading on the Main Menu using either the **left thumbstick** or the **directional pad**, and press the **A** button.

THE GAME SCREEN

The Game Screen refers to the in-game displays that you will see on the screen when playing Nightcaster II: Equinox. Contained within is all of the relative information that you will need about the current status of your character and the items and spells that you possess to complete your quest.



The Spell Amulet

In the bottom left corner of the screen is the Spell Amulet. Within each of its four sockets rests a talisman that represents a spell. The color of each talisman and the image depicted upon it symbolizes both the school of magic the spell belongs to as well as the individual spell it represents. The large talisman in the center of the amulet is the spell that is ready to cast. Keep in mind that any spell that you have can be loaded into the Spell Amulet for instant use via the Spell Scroll.

At the bottom of the Spell Amulet, you will see a dark bar. This is your Charge Indicator and is used to display the current charge.

Health Meter

Located next to the Spell Amulet is a red bar. This is your Health Meter, a representation of the amount of lifeforce that your character currently possesses. Always remember to keep a close eye on it, for if it ever becomes empty, your character will die.

Mana Display

Located to the right of the Spell Amulet and above the Health Meter is a series of ten circles, or orbs, set in a golden band. This is the Mana Display, a representation of the amount of magical energy that you can use to cast spells. Keep in mind that the amount of mana in this display is directly dependent upon your skill with the selected school of magic.

Compass

To the right of the Health Meter and Mana Display is the Compass. This compass always points due north and when used together with the map that is located in the Level Info section of the Spell Scroll, shall prove a valuable navigational tool.

Inventory Item Display

Located at the top of left hand corner of the screen is the current Inventory Item Display. Keep in mind that if you do not have any Single Use or Multi Use inventory items, this display will not appear.

THE SPELL SCROLL

The Spell Scroll contains all of the information relative to the game of Nightcaster II: Equinox. To access the Spell Scroll when in the game, simply press the **White** button.



Included therein are pages containing all of the information on your player/character's Spells, their Inventory, the information about the Player themselves, the information about the Level you are currently on as well as the Options available to you for the game.

To move through the pages of the Spell Scroll, simply press **left** or **right** on either the **left thumbstick** or the **directional pad**.

SPELL PAGES

The Spell Pages of the Spell Scroll lists all of the magic that your character currently possesses. These are broken down into separate pages for each Spell School: Fire, Water, Light and Dark.

Contained on the left side of each page is a listing of the spells that you currently possess from said school along with the talismans that represent them. To highlight a different spell from the spell list, simply press **up** or **down** on either the **left thumbstick** or the **directional pad**.

On the right side of the page is a display of your current Spell Amulet assignments followed by a description of the spell that is currently selected in the Spell Scroll.

Assigning New Spells

To assign a new spell to the Spell Amulet, highlight the spell that you wish to load from the list at the left by pressing **up** or **down** on either the **left thumbstick** or the **directional pad**. Once you have the spell selected, rotate the Spell Amulet by pressing the **left trigger** until the spell talisman that you wish to replace is located in the active spell slot, represented by the largest talisman located in the middle of the Spell Amulet. To replace the active spell with the spell that you have selected, simply press the A button. Notice that the icon that represents the spell that you have selected will be substituted for the icon that represents the spell that you have replaced in the Spell Amulet.

INVENTORY PAGE

The Inventory Page of the Spell Scroll contains icons for all of the items that your character currently possesses. These items are broken down into two categories, Single Use Items and Multi Use Items, which appear as individual icons on the left side of the page. The right side of the page is reserved for descriptions of each of the items.

To scroll through the icons that are contained in these lists, thereby displaying their description on the right side of the page, simply press **up** or **down** on either the **left thumbstick** or the **directional pad**.



Single Use Items

There are a number of Single Use Items located throughout the game. These are items that are consumed when used in the game, such as Health Potions or Mana Potions.

The eight circles below the Single Use Items heading are reserved for the display of the icons used to represent any and all single use items that can be found in the game. Located near the lower right corner of the icons is a smaller circle. This circle displays the number of the individual items that you currently possess. For example, if you have 12 Health Potions, an icon of a red potion bottle will be displayed in the larger circle, and in the smaller circle to the lower right, the number '12' will appear. Single Use Items can be found throughout the game.

Multi Use Items

There are a number of Multi Use Items located throughout the game. These are powerful artifacts that are not consumed when used in the game, such as the Hourglass or the Circlet of Life. These items usually require a certain amount of Mana to function, but will not disappear when used.

The eight circles below the Multi Use Items heading are reserved for the display of icons used to represent any and all multi use items that can be found and used more than once in the game. Keep in mind that many of these items are permanent, and once picked up, will remain in your character's inventory through out the game.

PLAYER INFO PAGE

The Player Info Page is used to display all of the pertinent information that applies to your character. This includes all information concerning your skill in Fortitude, Prowess, Knowledge and Health, your current Mana Distribution, as well as the current Level and Experience points that your character has accumulated.



Fortitude

Represented by a shield icon, this skill signifies the resilience in spirit and body that is possessed by your character. Fortitude helps determine how much damage your character takes from physical and colorless attack while defending.

Prowess

Represented by a crossed-swords icon, Prowess stands for how powerful and skilled in physical combat your character has become.

Knowledge

Represented by a rolled scroll icon, this statistic signifies your character's current skill in the use of magic.

Health

Represented by a heart icon, this statistic signifies the amount of health out of the your character's highest possible total, that you have achieved.

Mana Distribution

Below the skill displays is your Mana Distribution display. Pictured within are four orb bars that mimic the Mana Display that appears on the Game Screen. These bars represent your current mana available for each school of magic: Fire, Water, Light and Dark.

Level

Your character achieves different levels throughout the game. Displayed underneath the visual representation of your character to the left of the page is your current level. Levels are achieved by accumulating Experience points that are gained each time you defeat a creature in battle.

Experience

Located beneath the visual representation of your character to the left of the page is your experience bar. This bar is a visual representation of what you need to reach the next level. When it is full, your character will Level Up, and the bar will become empty, filling again as you gain experience.

The following table displays the amount of experience needed to achieve each level.

*For more information on levels, please see the section on the Leveling Up.



Level Experience Required

| | |
|----|---------|
| 1 | 0 |
| 2 | 2,000 |
| 3 | 5,000 |
| 4 | 9,000 |
| 5 | 14,000 |
| 6 | 20,000 |
| 7 | 27,000 |
| 8 | 35,000 |
| 9 | 44,000 |
| 10 | 54,000 |
| 11 | 65,000 |
| 12 | 77,000 |
| 13 | 90,000 |
| 14 | 104,000 |
| 15 | 119,000 |
| 16 | 135,000 |
| 17 | 152,000 |
| 18 | 170,000 |
| 19 | 189,000 |
| 20 | 209,000 |
| 21 | 230,000 |
| 22 | 252,000 |
| 23 | 275,000 |
| 24 | 299,000 |
| 25 | 324,000 |

LEVEL INFO PAGE

The Level Info Page contains all of the information on the current level that your player is on. This includes a Map and Map Key that illustrates your character's current positioning on the level as well as all of the current stats such as your Favorite Weapon, your level Ranking, Combats Cleared and Artifacts Found.

Map

On the left side of the Level Info Page is a Map of the level your character is currently exploring. Displayed on the map are icons representing the entrance and exit to the level as well as your character's current position.

Map Key

Located at the top of the right side of the page is the Map Key. This includes the name of the map that your character is currently exploring as well as a key to the icons that appear on it. To the right of the Map Key is an arrow icon that demonstrates the direction that north lies relative to the map.

Favorite Weapon

Located underneath the Map Key is your character's Favorite Weapon. Shown therein is the icon and name of the spell or weapon that your character has relied on most often when traveling through the level.

Ranking

Displayed beneath your character's Favorite Weapon is your character's current level Ranking. This is based on the percentage of Combats Cleared as well as Artifacts Found.

Combats Cleared

Located beneath your Ranking is your Combats Cleared display. The number on the left signifies the current number of enemy combat areas you have cleared. The number on the right signifies the total combat areas that you will find on the level.

Artifacts Found

Located beneath your Ranking and to the right of your Combat Cleared listing is the Artifacts Found display. The number to the left signifies the current artifacts that you have found. The number to the right signifies the total artifacts that exist on the level.



**OPTIONS PAGE**

To a large part, the Options Page grants you the same access to the settings in the game as found in the Options section of the Main Menu. You can adjust Audio and Game Options, as well as Load, Save or Quit your current game.

Controller Layout Page

Using either the **left thumbstick** or the **directional pad** to position the cursor next to Controller Layout will display all of the control settings that are associated with the game.

Audio Options Page

Simply move the cursor next to the Audio Options heading using either the **left thumbstick** or the **directional pad** and press the **A** button to adjust the Audio Settings.

To adjust any of these settings, simply press **up** or **down** on either the **left thumbstick** or the **directional pad** to position the cursor next to the heading of the effects that you would like to change. When high-lighted, press **left** or **right** on either the **left thumbstick** or the **directional pad** to adjust the various settings. When satisfied, simply press the **A** button to confirm your selections.

Game Options Page

To adjust the Game Options, simply move the cursor next to the heading using either the **left thumbstick** or the **directional pad** and press the **A** button. This will gain you access to the various settings that are located to the right of the screen.

To adjust these settings, simply press **up** or **down** on either the **left thumbstick** or the **directional pad** to position the cursor next to the heading of the effect that you would like to change. When highlighted, press **left** or **right** on either the **left thumbstick** or the **directional pad** to adjust. When satisfied with your selections, simply press the **A** button to confirm.

Load Game

To Load a saved game from the Spell Scroll, position the cursor next to the heading using the **left thumbstick** or the **directional pad** and press the A button. This will bring you to the Load Source-Page where you can choose to load a saved game from the Xbox Hard Disk or any one of the Memory Units that are currently plugged into one of the controllers.

The Load Source Page

To distinguish where you would like to load the game from, simply use either the **left thumbstick** or the **directional pad** to choose the source that you wish to load the game from. When satisfied with your selection, press the **A** button. To return to the Spell Scroll, press the **B** button.

The Load Game Page

The Load Game Page displays the space information about the source hardware that you have chosen as your load destination as well as the names of all of the saved games that are currently stored within. To choose a game that you wish to load, simply highlight the game you wish to load by pressing up or down on either the **left thumbstick** or the **directional pad**. Once the appropriate saved game tag is highlighted, simply press the **A** button to load it. To return to the previous screen without loading a game, simply press the **B** button.

Save Game

To Save a game from the Options Page, position the cursor next to the heading using the **left thumbstick** or the **directional pad** and press the A button. This will bring you to the Save Source Page where you can choose to load a saved game from the Xbox Hard Disk or any one of the Memory Units that are currently plugged into one of the controllers.

The Save Source Page

To distinguish where you would like to save the game to, simply use either the **left thumbstick** or the **directional pad** to choose the source that you wish to load the game from. When satisfied with your selection, press the A button. To return to the Spell Scroll, press the B button.

The Save Game Page

The Save Game Page displays the space information about the source hardware that you have chosen as your save destination as well as the names of all of the saved games that are currently stored within. To create a new save game, simply highlight Empty Slot by pressing **up** or **down** on either the **left thumbstick** or **directional pad**, and press the A button. A new tag will be created signifying the currently saved SAME.

To save over an existing game, simply highlight the game you wish to overwrite by pressing **up** or **down** on either the **left thumbstick** or the **directional pad**. Once the appropriate saved game tag is highlighted, simply press the A button to save it. Keep in mind that you will be asked to confirm that you wish to save over the selected game. Pressing the A button will confirm your choice, pressing the B button will cancel it. To return to the Options Page without saving a game, simply press the B button.

Quit Game

To abandon your current game without saving, highlight Quit Game by pressing **up** or **down** on either the **left thumbstick** or the **directional pad** and press the A button. Keep in mind that you will be asked to confirm that you wish to exit the game. Pressing the A button will confirm your choice, pressing the B button will cancel it.

LEVEL UP PAGE

When your character has accumulated enough Experience to get to the next level, a Level Up tag will appear upon the Game Screen. Each time you attain a new level, you will have the opportunity to assign a level point by opening the Spell Scroll.

Once you have achieved a level and open the Spell Scroll, you will automatically be brought to the Level Up Page. Here you can assign any accumulated level points to one of five separate categories: Fire, Water, Light, Dark or Melee.

A point applied to any of the four schools of magic will involve a standard increase to your skill in Fortitude, Prowess and Health, a superior gain in Knowledge, as well as a gain in Mana according to the school that has been selected.

A point applied to Melee will involve a small standard increase in Knowledge, a superior gain in Fortitude, Prowess and Health, but no increase to Mana.

Keep in mind that since Madelyn is already a master of the sword, she will receive bonuses when you apply her level points to Melee. Accordingly, since Arran is an adept wizard, he will receive bonuses when applying level points to Fire, Water, Light or Dark.



SPELL ASSIGNMENT PAGE

One of the objects that you will encounter in the world of NightCaster II: Equinox is the Spell Token. Spell Tokens will unlock a previously unknown spell or gain access to the 2nd level of a previously known spell.



Fire Spell Token

Unlocks any Fire spell.



Water Spell Token

Unlocks any Water spell.



Light Spell Token

Unlocks any Light spell.



Dark Spell Token

Unlocks any Dark spell.





Whenever you pick up a Spell Token, the Spell Scroll will automatically open to the Spell Assignment Page. Once at the page, you can choose to apply the Spell Token to either unlock an unknown spell or gain the 2nd Level of a previously known spell. To do so, position the cursor next to the spell you wish to unlock using either the **left thumbstick** or the **directional pad**. Keep in mind that any spell that you already know will have a spell icon located to the left of its title. Any spell that you do not currently know will have an empty icon slot next to its title. To confirm your selection, press the **A** button. To return to the game, press the **White** button to close the Spell Scroll.







SPELLS

Following is a list of all the spells that are available in the world of Nightcaster II: Equinox. Keep in mind that each and every spell also contains a 2nd level, which fires a more ferocious version of the spell.





The School of Fire

-  **Flame Spike**
Fires flaming barbs at the enemy
-  **Fire Ward**
Spinning blades of fire provide protection
-  **Fireworks**
Burning embers rain down on the enemy
-  **Flameshape**
Looses spirits of fire on the enemy





The School of Water

-  **Winter's Wind**
Unleashes the breath of Winter
-  **Ice Shard**
Fires a splinter of ice at the enemy
-  **Flash Freeze**
Freezes the enemy for a time
-  **Water Glyph**
Summons forth the symbol of water power

The School of Light

-  **Thunder**
Summons a storm cloud that discharges radiant lightning
-  **Primal Light**
A ray of light pierces the enemy
-  **Knight's Arrow**
Arrows of pure light fire at the enemy
-  **Light Glyph**
Summons forth the symbol of light power

The School of Dark

-  **Dark Arc**
Summons a storm cloud that discharges dark lightning
-  **Venom Strike**
Unleashes poisonous serpents on the enemy
-  **Dark Death**
Dark blades are summoned from the shadows
-  **Dark Glyph**
Summons forth the symbol of dark power

THREATS AND DANGERS

There are many monsters and creatures that your character must face when traveling through the world of Nightcaster II: Equinox. Following is a list of the different classifications of creatures and dangers that you might encounter.

Critters

These are the smallest and most numerous of the creatures in the world of Nightcaster. Critters typically attack in mobs or swarms though some critters may also aggressively defend their homes. These tiny creatures are physically weak but very fast. Beware critters in large numbers; sheer numbers may overwhelm even the greatest of heroes.



Hardback

Before the Layman's Curse spread darkness throughout the land the hardback was thought of as a nuisance, nothing more. These hard-shelled insects were large but were neither aggressive towards men nor truly capable of causing more than minor scratches or bruises. The Nightcaster changed that almost overnight.

Now bristling with bony spines and possessed of an ability to drain the magical essences of a man, hardbacks began to pour into every settlement and village ravaging in swarms and destroying the lives and livelihood of countless citizens. Unfortunately, even with the defeat of the Nightcaster the threat of the hardback did not diminish. Hardbacks roam the wild and forgotten places of the world to this very day.

Grunts

While not as numerous or common as critters, Grunt creatures are also often seen in encounters in the wilds. These creatures typically appear in pairs or small groups of like-sized creatures. They have roughly twice the health, individually, as critters and deal almost twice as much damage per attack. Most Grunts cannot cast spells.

Of the sentient races that supported the Nightcaster throughout the time of shadows, the Goblin was most prominent. Every major horde of the Nightcaster filled out its ranks with Goblins, from the thuggish Goblin Lizard Riders to the malevolent Goblin Shamans.



Goblin Rider

Lizard Riders were the most common Goblin seen during the time of Shadows and were most often seen wielding wicked maces or hammers and riding astride their lizards in a mockery of Knights upon horseback.

Sergeants

Sergeant level creatures are often seen singly or in pairs leading larger groups of Grunts. That does not mean larger groups have not been seen, as many as five have been known to fight in a single group during the time of shadows. This class of creatures is noted typically by its size, usually being of medium or large scale, its combat capabilities and its health, which is typically three times that of a critter scale creature. Sergeants typically support groups of grunts from behind the conflict, bombarding their targets from relative safety but most Sergeants are perfectly capable of defending themselves in hand to hand combat.



Gnome Rider

Riding atop their absurd Juju birds, the Gnome riders were, by far, the most craven officers of the Nightcaster's army. While all Gnome riders are powerful mages, most are so paralyzed by fear that they will run screaming from any threat that moves in their direction, leaving their troops without leadership or support.

Lieutenants

Lieutenants are seldom seen in more than pairs on the field of battle, though there are examples of larger groupings in recorded history. Lieutenants, as the classification implies, are the leaders of the battle groups they accompany. These creatures usually cast powerful spells and are typically much slower than their troops.



Gorgon

When tales are told of Gorgons they most often spell of the snake-headed monstrosities that guarded the essences of Light and Darkness for the Nightcaster during the time of Shadows. Many forget the older tales that tell us the Gorgons were once beautiful creatures of light, sworn to protect the land of heroes beyond the rainbow bridge. The Gorgons of the past were amazing mistresses of the hunt. No matter their target, they always returned to the sounds of their platinum horns with their magic spears raised in triumph. So skilled at war and magic were the Gorgons that even the heroes that came to that land for their final rest would follow them readily into battle.

Tanks

Tanks are the titans of the battlefields. These creatures are all unique, massive in size and stature, and very powerful. They often exhibit diminished tactical planning due to their ponderously slow speeds, but they make up for it with their power and fortitude, which often allows them to wade into full companies of men with no apparent pain or discomfort. Tanks are often capable of multiple attacks, surprising enemy troops that take their lack of maneuverability for a lack of intelligence or flexibility. Many tanks are also notoriously difficult to damage due to their complex defenses. Tank level creatures are so difficult to support and deploy in battle that rarely is more than one ever seen in a single battle group.

Not all of the world's monsters served the Nightcaster during the time of shadows. In some cases, as with mankind itself, races of creatures stood divided in their support of the Nightcaster. Some monsters, as with the armored Ice Ogres of the North, knew nothing of the Nightcaster at all. Northern Ice Ogres, or Armored Ice Ogres, are far more aggressive than their southern cousins from the Mountains of Pain, but like their southern cousins, Armored Ice Ogres are more than capable of wreaking havoc on any threat they perceive. If provoked, these Ogres will usually attack first with powerful magic, but if further pressed will attack with blinding speed and razor sharp claw.



Ice Ogre

Turrets

Turret creatures are typically large, on par with Tank type creatures in size, power, and fortitude, but lack any form of overland mobility. Turrets typically lay in wait beneath the ground until an unsuspecting target comes close, the turret creature then spawns bursting from the ground near the target to attack with ranged or melee attacks. If the tides turn against them, Turret creatures are known to withdraw back underground to rethink their strategies and attack anew.

Typically seen only in the frigid wastes of the far north, Glacial Wyrms are a rare sight for any traveler. This is fortunate as all wyrms have a near insatiable thirst for warm-blooded creatures such as man. Glacial Wyrms lurk beneath the deep ice, dozing until the warmth of a creature passing overhead awakes them and drives them to crash through the ice and spit freezing venom at their prey, which they can then devour at their leisure.



Glacial Wurm

Glyphs

Some of the creatures in the world of Nightcaster II: Equinox still cling to the ancient ways of ritual magic, using long forgotten symbols to unlock frightful explosions of magic. These symbols are called Glyphs and have long been employed to hinder the progress of unwanted trespassers.

Glyphs appear as symbols that have been etched upon the ground. Any foolish enough to tread upon these ancient markings find themselves in the middle of a mighty magical explosion.

Glyphs are usually relatively invisible to the naked untrained eye, but if you have an advanced understanding in the skill of Knowledge, you should be able to see the hazy outline of the rune before your tread across it. Keep in mind that the higher your Knowledge skill, the easier it is to see the weavings of the rune, thus the easier it is to avoid them.



HINTS AND STRATEGIES

There are many different ways to succeed in the world of Nightcaster II: Equinox. Surely you will be able to uncover your own style of play and make it work for you. Following, however, are a few basic strategies that have helped countless heroes that have come before you.

Spell Strategies

Opposite Colors

As is the nature of the magic, Fire stands in opposition of Water, and Dark in the opposition of Light. Creatures are more susceptible to magic from the school that is opposite their own. It is a philosophy to learn and live by.

Crowd Control

Some spells are known to have an area of effect, damaging any creature that happens to stand within its perimeter. Spells of this nature are sure to come in handy, especially when overrun. A well-placed area of effect spell, especially at the 2nd level of one, can really help make room when things have become their most congested

Mushrooms

Legend has it that there exists a volatile strain of mushroom that is known to have a rather extraordinary reaction to the presence of magic

Melee Strategies

Chaining Attacks

Attacks can be strung together to create more interesting and powerful attacks. Experiment with button combinations so you will have a slew of attacks right at your fingertips.

Magical Stones

Legend has it that there were once powerful magical stones that were said to grant any blade fantastic magical properties for a time. Used in a timely fashion, they have been known to turn the outlook of many a bleak battle.

General Strategies

Rewards for Style

Style rewards are a helpful boon triggered by the creative dispatching of creatures. When a Style Reward is in effect, be sure to make the most of it.

Cooperation

The Multi Player aspect of Nightcaster II: Equinox is all about cooperation. If playing with a friend, realize this it is not a contest between the two of you, but an adventure that will require both of you to be at your best. Playing towards the strengths of your individual characters will certainly help you to survive.



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